



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Federation Chamber

CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS

**Bradfield Electorate: Hornsby
Ku-ring-gai Women's Shelter**

SPEECH

Thursday, 25 September 2014

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Questioner
Speaker Fletcher, Paul, MP

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Mr FLETCHER (Bradfield—Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Communications) (09:39): I am very pleased to rise to speak about the planned Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Women's Shelter, which will provide temporary supported accommodation for women in times of crisis, such as homelessness and domestic violence. The project aims to provide a safe, non-threatening environment for women to assist them through their emotional and physical crisis.

The state-wide organisation Women's Community Shelters Limited is providing substantial financial and organisational support, and I acknowledge their leader, Annabelle Daniel. I also want to acknowledge the local committee which has been established and is busy raising funds towards both the set-up costs and the ongoing operational costs of the plan Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Women's Shelter. I want to acknowledge, particularly, John Lockyer for his work in leading that important committee. The aim is to have the premises secured for this shelter—operating, secured and open for business, if all goes to plan—before the end of this year. The operating expenses of the shelter will be in the order of several hundred thousand dollars a year. So it is a major exercise to get this established.

One in two women who are homeless or escaping domestic violence are turned away from crisis accommodation every day. The groups who are at particular risk include older single women, migrant women and women with little family support. There is a perception that women on Sydney's upper North Shore do not face issues such as homelessness or domestic violence but that is, sadly, not true. Today, there is no crisis accommodation to assist homeless women anywhere between Lane Cove and the Central Coast.

I was pleased to be able to lend my support. Each year I organise the Bradfield Comedy Debate to raise money for a worthwhile local cause. This year we were joined by prominent ex-Wallaby Peter Fitzsimons, together with other speakers, Bruce Meagher, Andrew Bell, Warren Lee, Steph D'Souza and Abigail McCarthy. We debated the topic 'That we have lost that larrikin spirit'. We had over 200 people in attendance and we raised over \$22,000, which will go towards the establishment of the Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Women's Shelter.

I want thank all who were involved. Not only did we have an entertaining afternoon but, very importantly, we raised significant funds to add to the excellent work being done by the local organising committee. When their work comes to fruition, fortunately, there will then be a place available to women in the Hornsby and Ku-ring-gai areas should they need safe, temporary, supported accommodation in times of crisis, such as homelessness or domestic violence.

I congratulate all of the local people, service organisations and so on who got behind the planned Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Women's Shelter. I would like to thank all those involved in the Bradfield Comedy Debate and I look forward to the shelter getting started and meeting the needs of women in crisis on the upper North Shore.